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ABSTRACT

This study sought to identify differences and similarities between principals' and teachers' perceptions of the elementary reading program and staff development. Subjects of the study were 245 primary and intermediate teachers and 51 elementary school principals. Data for the study were gathered by means of two sets of questionnaires which were administered to the subjects. The first question asked if teachers' perceptions of the principals' involvement in the reading program were similar to the perceptions of the principals. The second question asked if principals had similar perceptions to teachers with respect to staff development needs. Results indicated that teachers perceived principals to be less involved in the reading program than principals perceived themselves to be. Principals viewed staff development needs to be greater than did the teachers. Copies of the questionnaires are appended. (JD)

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I. INTRODUCTION

Educators and researchers are concerned with the working relationship between principals/supervisors and teachers. Recent studies have investigated and compared the perceptions of key persons in reading education (DeNicola, 1983).Findings from these investigations have provided valuable insight into the educational process in the elementary schools.

Principals and teachers are key persons in the effective reading program. Both have perceptions of reading instruction and their roles within a program (Bawden & Duffy, 1979). Investigations indicate that these two groups are not always in agreement concerning certain pedagogical considerations. The purpose of this study was to identify similarities and differences between principals' and teachers' perceptions of the elementary school reading program.

The research questions were:

1. Are teachers' perceptions of the principals' involvement in the reading program similar to the perceptions of the principals?

2. Are teachers' perceptions of staff development needs similar to the perceptions of principals?

II. Review of the Literature

DeNicola (1983) compared the perceptions of the roles of elementary school principals in the school reading program as perceived by the principals themselves, the classroom teacher, and the language skills teacher. Findings from this study revealed that principals expressed a need to be more involved in the reading program. In a study to compare principals' and teachers' perceptions of reading programs, principals indicated that they spent more time in reading classrooms than teachers indicated (Fryer, 1984). Principals and teachers differed significantly in their perceptions of the principals' involvement in the reading program, the use of various materials staff development needs. DeNicola (1983) reported that classroom teachers desire their principals to be more involved in the reading program. Fryer's (1984) study revealed, however, that primary and intermediate teachers were satisfied with their principals' involvement in the reading program in terms of obtaining materials, communicating with parents, setting a favorable school climate, and making district materials available for use.

Conley (1983) investigated an inservice program for teachers in a Chicago public school district. The study focused upon qualitative aspects of the staff development

program. Results revealed that inservice is needed to assist teachers in using new materials and procedures. Champagne (1980) has suggested several reasons for supporting staff development programs. Such programs are an effective means for providing encouragement to teachers. Smith, Otto and Hansen (1978) contended that because reading is considered the most important subject in the elementary school, teachers are defensive and reluctant to admit deficiencies and therefore do not readily show interest in inservice programs. Wood and Thompson (1980) reported that teachers are not satisfied with current staff development programs because of poor planning and organization, activities that are impersonal and unrelated to the day-to-day problems of participants, lack of participant involvement in the planning and implementation of their inservice, inadequate needs assessment and unclear objectives.

III. METHODOLOGY

A table of random numbers was used to select the 15 elementary schools from which the teacher subjects were obtained. Subjects for the study consisted of 245 teachers from those 15 schools and the entire district poplulation of 51 elementary school principals. The single stage cluster

sample of teachers yielded 160 primary teachers and 85 intermediate teachers. The data for the study were gathered by means of two sets of questionnaires which were administered to the principals and teachers. The principals'questionnaire requested two sets of responses: one in regard to primary teachers and one in regard to intermediate teachers.

The bootstrap approach as presented by Efron was used to analyze data (Diaconis & Efron, 1983). This method is useful for establishing statistical estimation and inference with only the assumption that the distribution in a given sample is a good estimation of the distribution in the parent population

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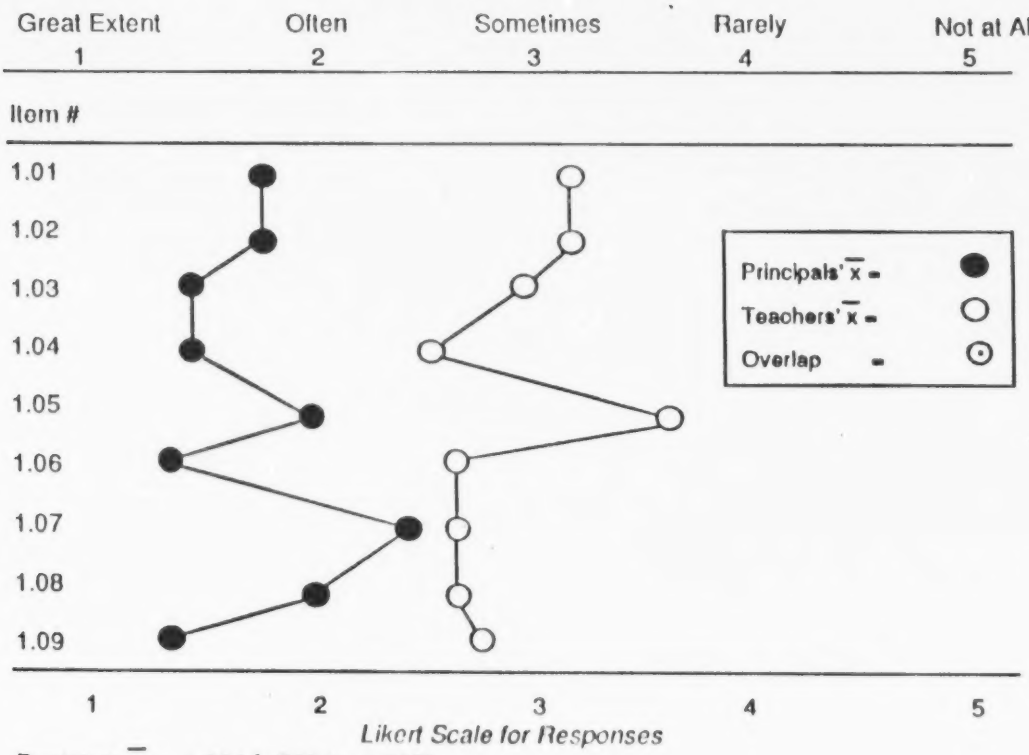
IV. ANALYSIS

Research Question #1 asked if teachers' perceptions of the principals'involvement in the reading program were similar to the perceptions of the principals. The scale related to this question consisted of 9 items with responses ranging from 1 (To a great extent) to 5 (Not at all). Principals responded to each item once with respect to primary teachers and once for intermediate teachers. Teachers responded only once to each item. Principals'



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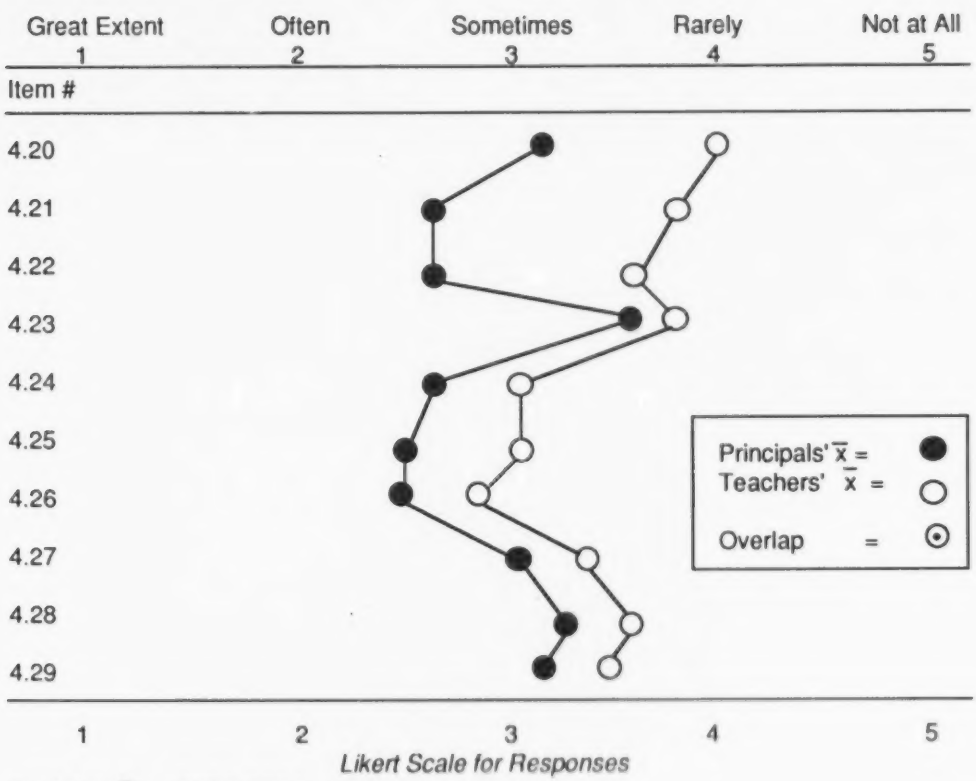
$P < .05$

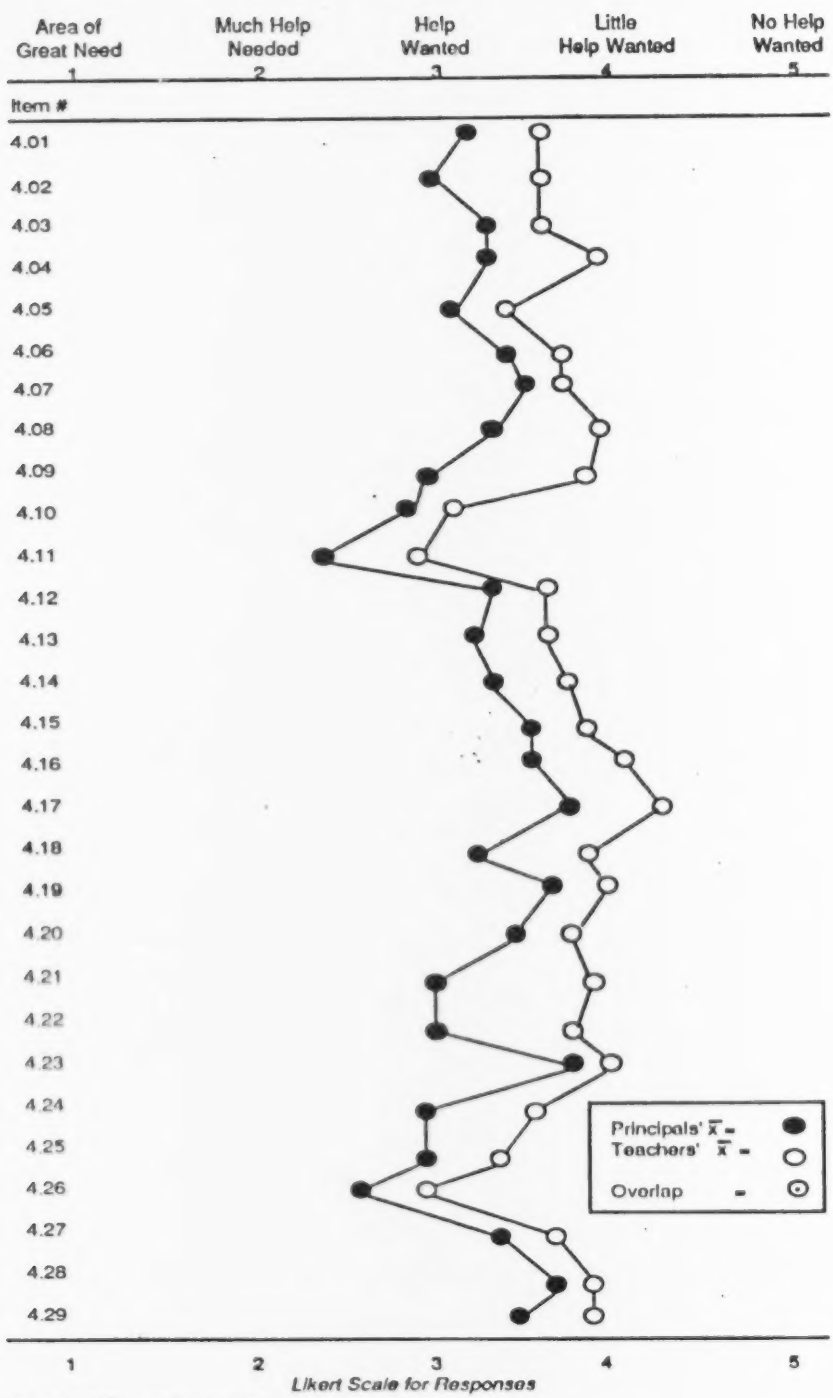
Figure 1: I. Principals' Involvement in the Reading Program (Grades 1-3).



Bootstrap $\bar{x}$ = -.535 [-.261 to -.785]

P > .05

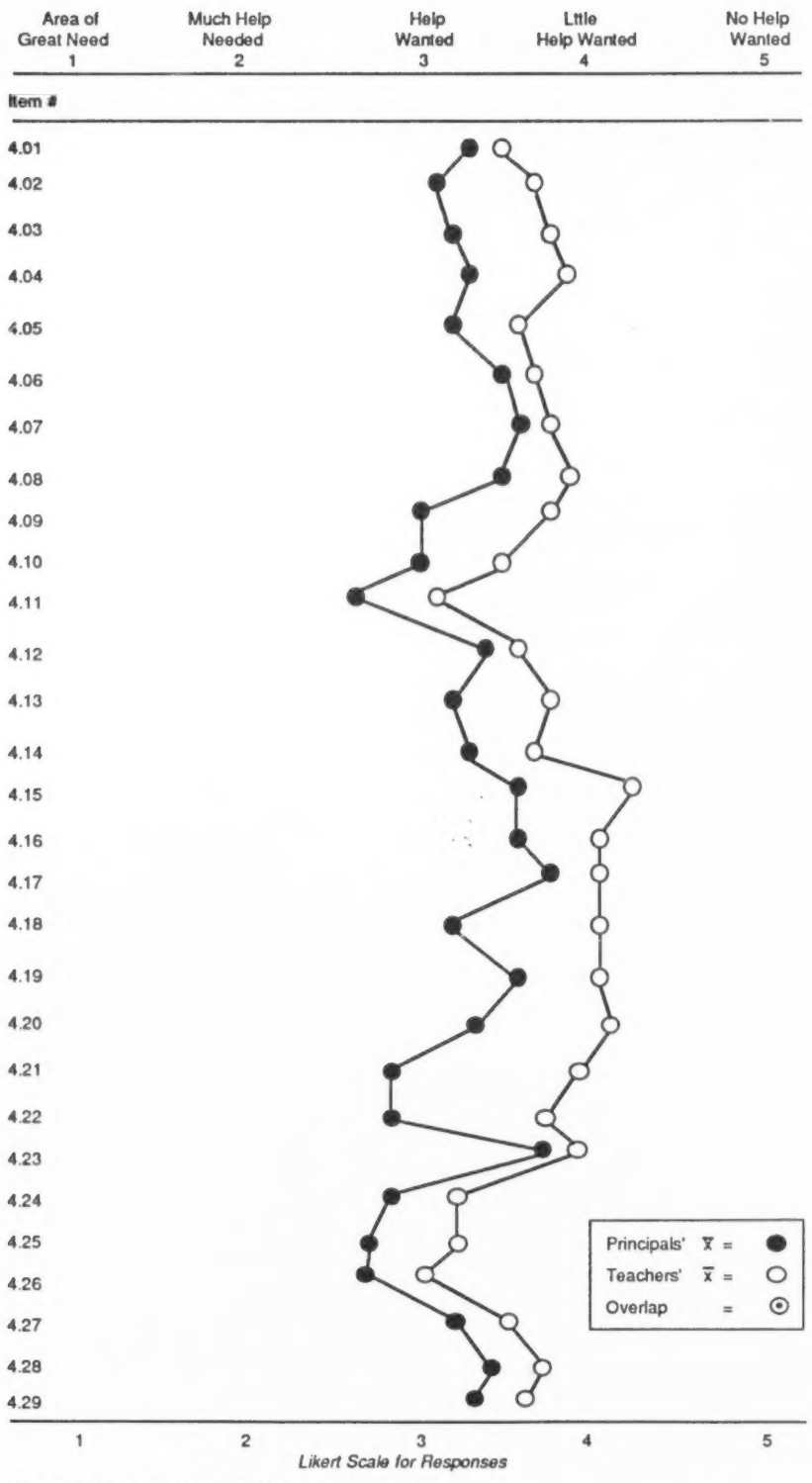
Figure 2: Reading Staff Development Needs (Grades 4-5).



Bootstrap $\bar{x}$ = -.472 [-.212 to -.739]

$P < .05$

Figure 3: V. Reading Staff Development Needs (Grades 1-3)



Bootstrap $\bar{x}$ = -.535 (-.261 to -.785)
$P > .05$

Figure 4 : V. Reading Staff Development Needs (Grades 4-5).

perceptions differed significantly from both primary and intermediate teachers with regard to the principals' involvement in the reading program. See response profiles, figure 1 and Figure 2.

Research Question #2 asked if principals had similar perceptions to primary and intermediate teachers with respect to staff development needs. The scale for this question consisted of 29 items with responses ranging from 1 (Area of great need) to 5 (No help wanted). Principals perceptions of staff development needs differed significantly from both primary and intermediate teachers. See response profiles, Figure 3 and Figure 4.

The entire questionnaire may be found in Appendix A

V. Summary

Both primary and intermediate teachers differed significantly from principals with respect to their perceptions of the principals' involvement in the reading program. Teachers perceived principals to be less involved in the reading program than principals perceived themselves to be.

Principals differed significantly from both primary and intermediate teachers in their perceptions of staff development needs. Principals viewed the needs to be

greater than teachers. Research reviewed for this study supports this finding.

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APPENDIX A

CLASSROOM TEACHER DATA

DIRECTIONS: Please check the appropriate responses. Round off to next highest year if needed.

1. The grade(s) you presently teach: 1 ☐A 2 ☐B 3 ☐C 4 ☐D 5 ☐E

2. Your sex: Female ☐A Male ☐B

3. Your age group: 20-29 ☐A 30-39 ☐B 40-49 ☐C 50-59 ☐D 60-69 ☐E

4. Years experience in grade(s) you currently teach. Include current year.

   1-3 ☐A 4-9 ☐B 10-14 ☐C 15-19 ☐D 20-24 ☐E 25-29 ☐F 30-34 ☐G 35-39 ☐H

   40-44 ☐I 45-49 ☐J

5. Total years experience in teaching. Include current year.

   1-3 ☐A 4-9 ☐B 10-14 ☐C 15-19 ☐D 20-24 ☐E 25-29 ☐F 30-34 ☐G 35-39 ☐H

   40-44 ☐I 45-49 ☐J

6. Current status: tenured ☐A non-tenured ☐B

7. Number of college or inservice courses you have had in reading instruction since beginning your teaching career:

   0 ☐A 1 ☐B 2 ☐C 3 ☐D 4 ☐E 5 ☐F 6 ☐G 7 ☐H 8 ☐I 9 ☐J 10-20 ☐K

8. Total number of children for which you are responsible for teaching reading:

   1-10 ☐A 11-15 ☐B 16-20 ☐C 21-25 ☐D 26-30 ☐E 31-35 ☐F 36-40 ☐G 41-45 ☐H

9. How many reading groups do you have in your typical reading class period?

   1 ☐A 2 ☐B 3 ☐C 4 ☐D 5 ☐E 6 ☐F 7 or more ☐G

10. What organizational pattern for reading instruction best describes your grade level pattern?

    within-room ☐A departmentalized ☐B homogeneous grouping within several classrooms ☐C

1.00 PRINCIPAL'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE READING PROGRAM

DIRECTIONS: The following are statements about your principal. Please indicate the extent of the involvement of your principal in your reading program by using the following scale: Circle your answer.

To a Great Extent	(GX)	1
Often	(O)	2
Sometimes	(S)	3
Rarely	(R)	4
Not At All	(NOT)	5

		GX	O	S	R	NOT
1.01	To what extent is your principal involved in your reading program (please consider all aspects, i.e., planning, facilitating, staff development, etc.)?	1	2	3	4	5
1.02	To what extent does your principal help you obtain and use materials for reading instruction?	1	2	3	4	5
1.03	To what extent does your principal encourage and/or help you to develop your teaching abilities in reading?	1	2	3	4	5
1.04	To what extent is your principal familiar with your classroom reading instruction efforts?	1	2	3	4	5
1.05	To what extent is your principal involved in the evaluation of your students in reading?	1	2	3	4	5
1.06	To what extent does your principal work to create a positive reading climate in your school?	1	2	3	4	5
1.07	To what extent is your principal willing to help make District reading resource personnel available to you?	1	2	3	4	5
1.08	To what extent is your principal willing to help make District reading resource materials available to you?	1	2	3	4	5
1.09	To what extent does your principal visit in your school's classroom during reading instruction activities.	1	2	3	4	5

2.00 CLASSROOM READING PRACTICES

DIRECTIONS: The following statements represent practices in various reading programs. Please indicate the extent to which each statement reflects your classroom reading practices by circling the appropriate number using the following scale:

Almost Always	(A)	1
Often	(O)	2
Sometimes	(S)	3
Rarely	(R)	4
Almost Never	(N)	5

		A	O	S	R	N
2.01	I use a basal series in reading instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
2.02	I use the teacher's manual of a basal series to help plan reading instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
2.03	Purposes for reading are set for students before they read the lesson silently.	1	2	3	4	5
2.04	I use questions and discussions to follow up on purposes set prior to silent reading.	1	2	3	4	5
2.05	I teach word recognition skills as part of my directed reading lesson.	1	2	3	4	5
2.06	I teach comprehension skills as part of my directed reading lesson.	1	2	3	4	5
2.07	I have students read specific passages silently before reading them orally.	1	2	3	4	5
2.08	I use oral reading only for specific reasons such as answering questions, sharing material with others, and participating in plays.	1	2	3	4	5
2.09	I explain to my students the reading skill being taught and its purpose as part of my reading instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
2.10	I use follow-up activities to extend and reinforce reading concepts.	1	2	3	4	5
2.11	I read to students.	1	2	3	4	5
2.12	Each of my reading students has an opportunity to read materials of her/his personal choice.	1	2	3	4	5
2.13	Each student in my reading class visits the media center/school library at least once a week.	1	2	3	4	5
2.14	Basal readers are kept at school and made available to children for instruction purposes only.	1	2	3	4	5

3.00 READING INSTRUCTION MATERIALS

PART A: FREQUENCY OF USE OF VARIOUS MATERIALS

DIRECTIONS: Rate how often you use the following instructional materials in your reading program. Circle the appropriate answer using the following scale:

Almost Always	(A)	1
Often	(O)	2
Sometimes	(S)	3
Rarely	(R)	4
Almost Never	(N)	5

		A	O	S	R	N
3.01	Basal reading textbooks.	1	2	3	4	5
3.02	Basal reading workbooks.	1	2	3	4	5
3.03	Books from other basal series than those I use for instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
3.04	Books from the media center or school library.	1	2	3	4	5
3.05	Books from public libraries.	1	2	3	4	5
3.06	Reference books, encyclopedias.	1	2	3	4	5
3.07	Duplicated materials.	1	2	3	4	5
3.08	Children's newspapers (Weekly Reader, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
3.09	Local newspapers.	1	2	3	4	5
3.10	Television programs.	1	2	3	4	5
3.11	Filmstrips.	1	2	3	4	5
3.12	Overhead transparencies.	1	2	3	4	5
3.13	Videotapes.	1	2	3	4	5

		A	O	S	R	N
3.14	Computers, instructional software.	1	2	3	4	5
3.15	Magazines, periodicals.	1	2	3	4	5
3.16	Teacher-made materials.	1	2	3	4	5
3.17	Bulleting boards.	1	2	3	4	5

PART B: BASAL READING PROGRAM MATERIALS

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate the extent to which each statement reflects the use of basal reading program materials in your classroom. Circle the appropriate answer using the following scale:

To a Great Extent	(GX)	1
Often	(O)	2
Sometimes	(S)	3
Rarely	(R)	4
Not At All	(NOT)	5

		GX	O	S	R	NOT
3.18	To what extent does the teacher's manual help you meet the goals and objectives of your reading program?	1	2	3	4	5
3.19	To what extent does the teacher's manual include a variety of instructional techniques to help you teach reading skills and/or concepts?	1	2	3	4	5
3.20	To what extent does the teacher's manual include a variety of instructional techniques to help you reteach skills and/or concepts?	1	2	3	4	5
3.21	To what extent does the content of the pupil text cover the materials you need to meet your reading goals and objectives?	1	2	3	4	5
3.22	To what extent do the students find the pupil text interesting to read?	1	2	3	4	5
3.23	To what extent are the text illustrations appealing to children?	1	2	3	4	5
3.24	To what extent are the text illustrations useful in teaching story concepts?	1	2	3	4	5

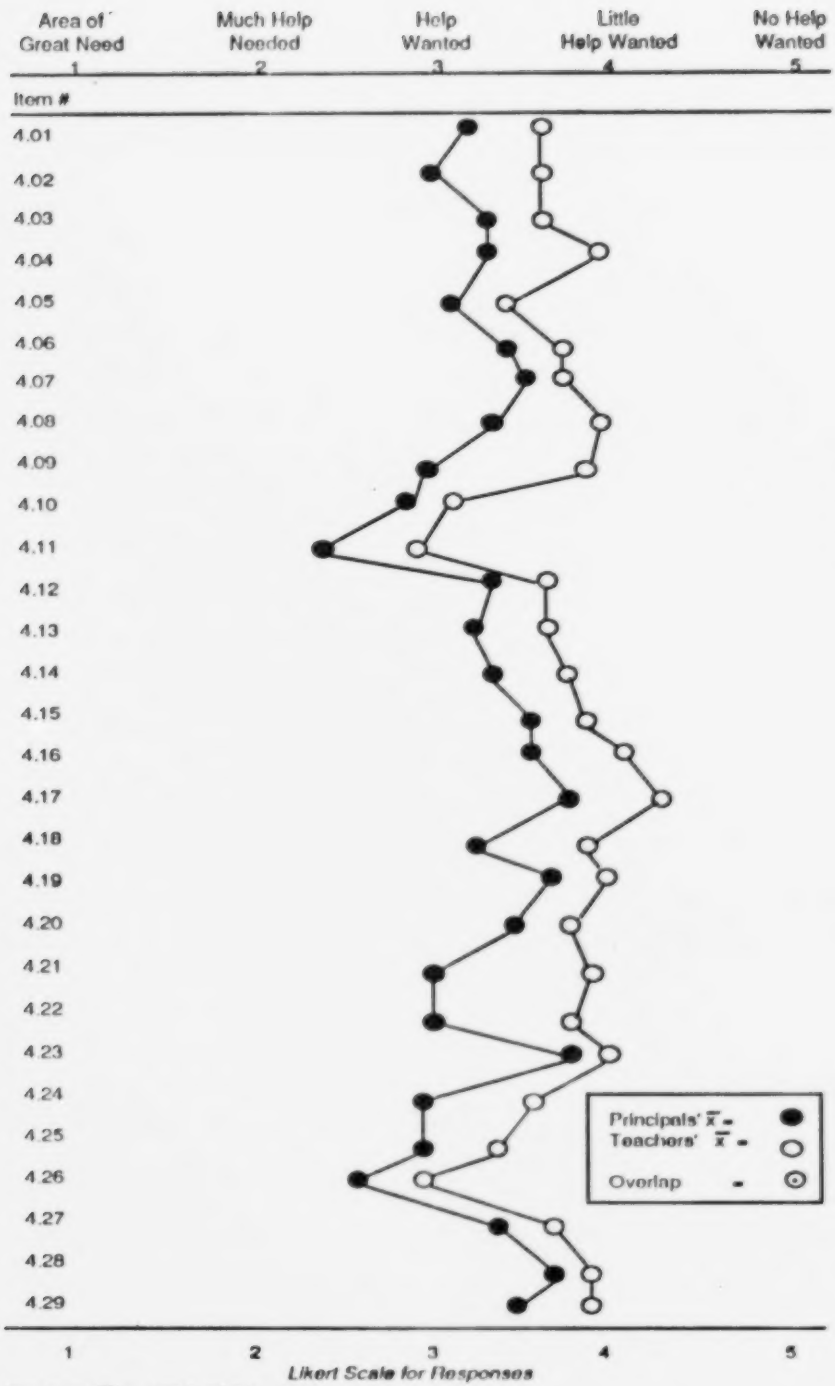
4.00 READING STAFF DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

DIRECTIONS: The following list represents some of the skills related to the teaching of reading. Please respond to all items by circling the number that corresponds to the extent you feel you need and/or want help in a given area. Use the following scale; note its difference from the previous ones.

Area of Great Need	(GN)	1
Much Help Needed	(MH)	2
Help Wanted	(H)	3
Little Help Wanted	(LH)	4
No Help Wanted	(NO)	5

		GN	MH	H	LH	NO
4.01	Determining the personal reading interests of children.	1	2	3	4	5
4.02	Using pupil interests in planning and selecting materials for instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
4.03	Organizing the classroom environment for effective reading instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
4.04	Grouping students for reading instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
4.05	Diagnosing individual reading needs of students.	1	2	3	4	5
4.06	Determining the readability of textbooks.	1	2	3	4	5
4.07	Determining the readability of library books.	1	2	3	4	5
4.08	Developing vocabulary for students.	1	2	3	4	5
4.09	Teaching reading in the content areas.	1	2	3	4	5
4.10	Teaching techniques most effective with gifted students.	1	2	3	4	5
4.11	Teaching techniques most effective with disabled readers.	1	2	3	4	5
4.12	Selecting appropriate supplementary reading materials.	1	2	3	4	5
4.13	Administering informal, teacher-made reading tests for determining the level on which students can be instructed more effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
4.14	Monitoring students' progress in reading on a regular basis.	1	2	3	4	5
4.15	Teaching specific word recognition skills such as context clues, syllabication, etc.	1	2	3	4	5

		GN	MH	M	LH	NO
4.16	Teaching phonics.	1	2	3	4	5
4.17	Teaching sight vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
4.18	Teaching comprehension skills such as main idea and recognizing relationships.	1	2	3	4	5
4.19	Teaching dictionary skills.	1	2	3	4	5
4.20	Teaching the use of various reference materials.	1	2	3	4	5
4.21	Using questioning techniques to improve comprehension skills.	1	2	3	4	5
4.22	Providing for individual differences in children when planning reading instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
4.23	Using a basal series and its accompanying materials more effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
4.24	Keeping informed about reading materials for use with pupils above and below grade level.	1	2	3	4	5
4.25	Keeping informed about new reading material in general.	1	2	3	4	5
4.26	Using computers in my reading program.	1	2	3	4	5
4.27	Using audio-visual equipment in my reading program.	1	2	3	4	5
4.28	Involving my principal more in supporting my reading program.	1	2	3	4	5
4.29	Involving the total school staff in identifying goals, planning, and carrying out reading inservice.	1	2	3	4	5



Bootstrap $\overline{x}$ = -.472 [-.212 to -.739]

$P < .05$

Figure 3: V. Reading Staff Development Needs (Grades 1-3)